THE SHAKESPEARE ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

SAMUEL A. TANNENBAUM, *Editor*

Contributing Editors

MRS. ROBERT CARLTON MORRIS ROBERT M. SMITH WILLIAM T. HASTINGS

Advisory Board

JOSEPH Q. ADAMS HARDIN CRAIG WILLIAM ALLAN NEILSON

VOL. XIX JULY, 1944 NO. 3

CONTENTS

PAGE

The Elizabethan Legacy (Conclusion) ..... *George C. Taylor* 99

The First American Performance of *Richard II* ..... *Arthur Colby Sprague* 110

Mr. Dover Wilson, the Critics and Falstaff ..... *Robert W. Babcock* 117

Longfellow, Lanier, Boker and *King Lear* ..... *Edward P. Vandiver, Jr.* 132

Psychology in *Othello* ..... *Brents Stirling* 135

Published quarterly, in January, April, July, and October, by The Shakespeare Association of America, Inc., 601 West 113th Street, New York.

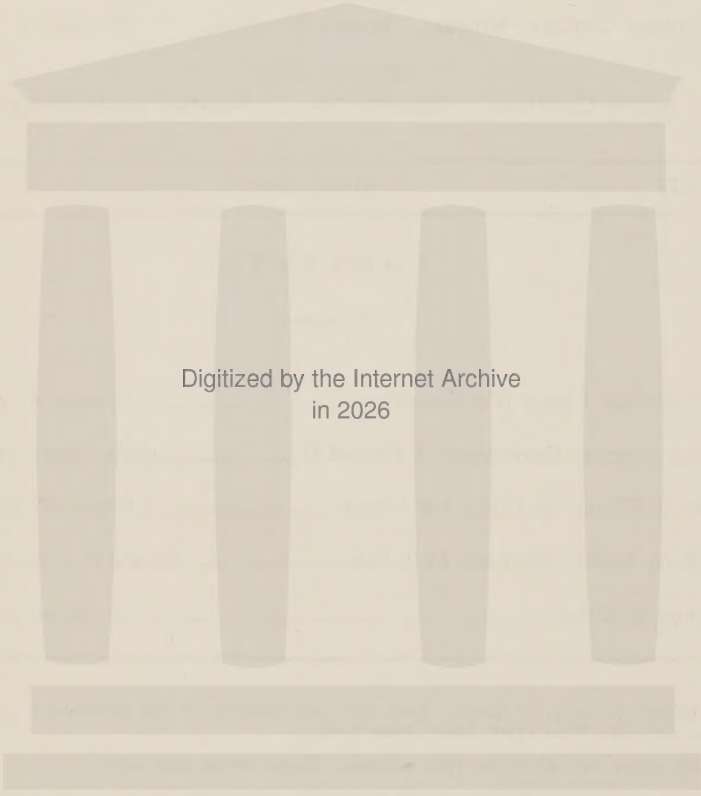
Subscription rate, $2.00 per year, postpaid. Single copies, fifty cents.

Membership in the Association includes annual subscription.

All correspondence relating to the conduct of the BULLETIN should be addressed to Dr. Samuel A. Tannenbaum, 601 West 113th Street, New York, N. Y.

Other matters relating to the work of the Association should be referred to the Secretary

Copyright, 1943, by The Shakespeare Association of America, Inc.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/shakespeare-association-bulletin_1944-07_19_3

ELIZABETHAN LEGACY

By George C. Taylor

(*Conclusion*)

"THE THIRST UNQUENCHABLE FOR KNOWLEDGE"[10]

THOUGH to all appearances the leading thinkers of today are far ahead of the leading Elizabethan thinkers as to man's limitless right to inquire into the constitution of ourselves and the constitution of the universe, we have yet to catch up with them in their boundless thirst for knowledge. The intensity of their literary expression of this theme finds no parallel in the literature of today. Knowledge, infinite knowledge, and yet, paradoxically enough, knowledge within common sense bounds, was the headiest of all Elizabethan intoxicants. To be sure, if we asked our leading thinker what he believes students, even morons, should be permitted to inquire into or pass judgment upon, he would be seized immediately with the fear of being thought recondite, illiberal, conventional, narrow, and would immediately (if pressed) answer, "Everything, anything." If, checked and asked again whether he wished to qualify his answer in the case of average and sub-average mental types or of immature minds, seized with the same fear, he would be very chary about denying the same privilege to anyone. Now a glance towards the Renaissance would reveal that the Elizabethan had analyzed this matter much more sensibly than we have and had a much more intense joy in the acquisition of knowledge as such even within bounds, than we have. That glance would reveal that they had, above all, a vastly greater faith in the efficiency of knowledge as power than we have. As suggested, in the whole range of modern literature, in fact not since Elizabethan days has there been any literary expression remotely comparable to that which shows the ecstasy of the Elizabethan at the mere thought of thought. Their delight in the acquisition of knowledge contributed the most amazing perfection of literary expression in that age of expression par excellence. Their faith in the

efficacy of knowledge has contributed the most hopeful aspect of its individual and political philosophy. Turn where you will, to Marlowe, Shakspere, Bacon, Milton, you get a lift from their artistic development of the idea not to be paralleled since; yes, not even in Pope's *Essay on Man.*

"Still", says Marlowe, "climbing after knowledge infinite."

"Yet", says Bacon, "the knowledge of truth is the sovereign good of human nature. . . . Yet truth, which only doth judge itself, teacheth that the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making or wooing of it, the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature. The first creature of God, in the works of the days, was the light of the sense; the last was the light of reason." Adds Bacon, "The desire of knowledge in excess caused man to fall. The desire of power in excess caused the angels to fall".

In Shakspere, the expressions of this theme are infinite in number and in excellence. Pericles: "I have ever held that virtue and cunning [knowledge] are endowments greater than nobleness and riches. Careless heirs may the two latter darken and expend but immortality attends the former, making a man a God!" Hamlet exclaims as to man: "In apprehension how like a god" and his "sovereign reason" runs like a thread of fire through the entire texture of the play where the thinker reaches a climax in his "Thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls," or in the miraculous constructive or disintegrating power of thought in his "There's nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so." Milton, carrying it forward, or rather on, lets his Satan say what Hamlet said,

> "The mind is its own place and in itself
> Can make a heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven."

On goes the theme, contributing indeed to the farthest reaches of the Elizabethan expression and art, through the sonnets, lyrics, epics, prose. Is it possible to revive today an enthusiasm for knowledge which could result in literary expressions of a lasting nature such as these?

The unquenchable thirst for knowledge contributing so vividly to them to the art form of poetry and prose of the period, was no more extraordinary than the intense Elizabethan faith in its efficacy—so much more intense than that of our age. As suggested above, in Hamlet's mind it made a man a god, with the creative power of the gods. Marlowe's Faustus, though the conception is at times sensationally cheap, gives his eternal jewel to the common enemy of man for limitless temporary world-power to be secured—*through knowledge*. With it, and the power on the part of an individual to clothe it in perfect language, one could with ease "take the giant world by the throat and throw it." Portia's words to Nerissa express the tremendous conception with a simplicity and ease far more effective than do some of the highly colored rhetorical expressions of the idea: "If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been cathedrals and poor men's cottages princes' palaces." Where among modern leaders of thought is one to catch this spirit, so contagious then, of faith in the efficacy of knowledge judiciously applied? Bertrand Russell is a case in point of the reverse. At the very highest point of his exultation over the thought of the complete freedom of intellect as it ranges through worlds and worlds, he ends in what?—hopelessness, despair, and utter loneliness in the midst of a universe running down or the crash of matter and the ruin of worlds.

> "Brief and powerless is Man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way; for Man condemned to-day to lose his dearest, to-morrow himself to pass through the gate of darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day; disdaining the coward terrors of the slave of Fate, to worship at the shrine that his own hands have built;undismayed by the empire of chance, to preserve a mind free from the wanton tyranny that rules his outward life; proudly defiant of the irresistible forces that tolerate, for a moment, his knowledge and his condemnation, to sustain alone, a weary but unyielding Atlas, the world that his own ideals have fashioned despite the trampling march of unconscious power."

It is open to anyone who wishes to believe it, whether this last attitude, expressed so poignantly by Russll, is more

potent and restorative to a mental world constituted as ours is now than the splendid power of the concept of the Elizabethans in the efficacy of knowledge and its contribution to our happiness rather than our despair.[11] Perhaps the most puzzling aspect of the Elizabethan concept of knowledge is that it was so limitless in one sense and yet so limited in common sense. In sharp contrast to our present day assumption that it is reasonable to ask the most futile questions as to *why* in addition to *how* the construction of the universe is as it is, the Elizabethan did set a reasonable limit to the tendency of the reason to wander to utterly unreasonable limits. Milton and every great philosophical theologian back of him, through Philo Judeus through Augustine, saw how dangerous it was to ask *why,* how helpful to ask *how* as to the nature of the universal frame of things.

> "But apt", says Milton, "the mind or fancy is to rove
> Unchecked, and of her roving is no end;
> Till warned, or by experience taught, she learn
> That not to know at large of things remote
> From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
> That which before us lies in daily life,
> Is the prime wisdom; what is more, is fume,
> Or emptiness, or fond impertinence,
> And renders us in things that most concern
> Unpractised, unprepared, and still to seek."

And so, step by step he passes in his great epic to his definition to the sum of wisdom:

> "This having learned, thou hast attained the sum
> Of wisdom; hope no higher, though all the stars
> Thou knew'st by name, and all the ethereal powers,
> All secrets of the deep, all Nature's works,
> Or works of God in heaven, air, earth, or sea,
> And all the riches of this world enjoy'dst,
> And all the rule, one empire; only add
> Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add faith,
> Add virtue, patience, temperance, add love,
> By name to come called charity, the soul
> Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loth
> To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
> A Paradise within thee, happier far."

Meantime Milton reaches a conception of knowledge being like food, most digestible and indigestible by turns to different people of different periods of maturity:

"Of knowledge within bounds; beyond abstain
To ask, nor let thine own inventions hope
Things not revealed, which the invisible King,
Only omniscient, hath suppresed in night,
To none communicable in Earth or Heaven:
Enough is left besides to search and know.
But knowledge is as food, and needs no less
Her temperance over appetite, to know
In measure what the mind may well contain,
Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns
Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind."

A conception which might go a long way if anything could towards remedying the monstrous educational excesses of an undisciplined intellect of our time.

STUDENT AND TEACHER RELATIONSHIP

Nothing in the Elizabethan Age differentiates it from ours more than the relationship which existed then between teacher and pupil. Gone today, ground to pieces by the ponderous machinery of education grinding out its mass, synthetic products, is that wonderful relation between student and teacher best illustrated perhaps in the case of Socrates. "O pupil mine." The words of Friar Lawrence to Romeo as he saves Romeo from becoming a cowardly beast, one will seek in vain to find in the vocabulary of any modern teacher. It was in the air this matter of inexperience looking to experience for help in the certain faith it would find help there, if anywhere. Instead has come about in our whole educational system an ever widening chasm of formality between student and professor which would seem amusing, but for its tragic implications. A completely impersonal attitude on the professor's part,—an attempt to conceal any further enthusiasm for the professor on the part of the student, is one of the professor-student affectations which came recently to a head on all sophisticated campuses. Sometimes the most amusing manifestations of all is observable in students petted by some female or effeminate male in the high schools to the point of generating a superiority complex which makes all aware that he has come to the university not to be taught by but to educate his professor. He has already acquired all knowledge. He can grow no more,—a static educational anomaly. Occasionally, of

course, some teacher manages to stimulate their enthusiasm, especially if the leader manages to acquire the art of gathering disciples. Then the students coalesce in great masses delighted with the thought of being made disciples. But this is rare. Making a disciple results again in a student who can grow no more. It is perhaps asking too much to hope for a restoration in this highly mechanized educational age, of that wonderfully enlightening relationship of mutual give and take, trust and confidence, and general mutual respect for each other of student and teacher in the Elizabethan age. But we can at least acknowledge our inferiority in this matter and try in some measure to remedy it. Adam talking to Raphael, Romeo to Friar Lawrence, any inexperienced youth, thirsty for knowledge, conversing with any experienced and cultivated teacher in the Renaissance, will give us at least something to exhilarate us and something in part to look forward to achieving in the educational planning of today. Certainly, it will help us to avoid some of the most treacherous and despairing pitfalls in the modern educational jungle. And best of all it may tempt us to be less arrogant and superior in our contempt for past civilizations as compared with what we now term civilization.

INTELLECTUAL HAVENS

The Elizabethan leading thinkers in contrast to our own had one last refuge and haven when all else failed them. Confronted by the possibility at any time of unendurable torture of himself or children before his eyes, he chose one of two alternatives. He could either adopt the comforting philosophy of death through suicide, or of enduring life under any circumstances by stoicism or by the belittling or contempt of life. As to suicide, Montaigne and Shakspere express the philosophy at it best. Montaigne says we always have the *key to the field,* the Elysian fields, in our own hands. By killing yourself, you unlock the door of this prison of the present and pass out immediately into the company of the noble dead, as Shelley longed to do at the very end of *Adonais.* Shakspere's Cassius gives this idea even a nobler slant:

> "I know where I will wear this dagger then;
> Cassius from bondage will deliver Cassius.

Therein, ye gods, you make the weak most strong;
Therein, ye gods, you tyrants do defeat.
Nor stony tower, nor walls of beaten brass,
Nor airless dungeon, nor strong links of iron,
Can be retentive to the strength of spirit;
But life, being weary of these worldly bars,
Never lacks power to dismiss itself.
If I know this, know all the world besides,
That part of tyranny that I do bear
I can shake off at pleasure."

If, however, the doctrine of suicide seemed cowardly, as it did to some, then one could always turn to the philosophy of consolation through living it out to the end by looking with contempt upon life as adored by the average conventional unthinking biped by courtesy called man. He could explore the wonderful books of Boethius and later of Lipsius, and scores of others, and lift himself up to a point of saying and thinking, "Stone walls do not a prison make", or as Hamlet has it, "There's nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so." The "Private Life" so frequently referred to in the literature of the time, a home to which the thinker in public life who had become a stranger to himself could profitably return, is illustrated by Mark Antony's request to Octavius Caesar after his defeat "to let him breathe between the heavens and earth a private man in Athens." And so after living on this principle, one could arrive finally at the point when he could, like Socrates, "meet the night of death as calmly as a star meets morning."

It is easy enough to surmise why the consolation of philosophy, however, true and serviceable it may be, has been avoided by all leading thinkers of our time at this present hour when countless millions are being surrounded by the same unendurable conditions of life as of old. Should we have the brains to cultivate a Paradise within us happier far than the Early Paradise, what would our leaders throughout the world have to organize and play with? One fine enough to cultivate a philosophy of adjustment is without hate and makes no good rebel. And the easiest of all principles on which to organize vast masses of men is hate rather than love. The demand on the part of each of us to every conceivable material gadget or comfort alone makes

possible the satisfaction of the lust for power of leadership, even when such lust is cloaked in the guise of philanthropy. As long as the individual man is denied today the right to the development of contentment and the happy mind, and leadership can thrive only when it whips up to a fine frenzy the spirit of irritation, discontent, class-hatred, national hatred, race hatred, all fanned to phobias around us now, we shall continue to move in our vicious circles and war. We of today are as dreadfully sure as was the middle ages, surer than the Renaissance, of our inalienable right to ruthlessness to obtain perfectability of collective man at the expense of the increasing imperfectability of every individual, of every unit that goes to the make-up of this perfected state, contradiction in terms if there ever was one. Ah, but once having achieved the perfect civil and political state, we can then get to work on the perfection of the individuals. Does this make sense? Fortunately the right to extract the essence of good out of apparent evil is a fundamental right not to be overturned. It can under no conceivable set of circumstances be rooted out among thinking individuals. A return to the Renaissance would do much to renew our faith in this right and in the efficacy of the philosophy of it.

FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

This disregard and suppression by way of silence and ridicule of entirely legitimate intellectual points of view necessary to the development of fine individuals is due in fact, of course, to our blind faith in the efficacy of this or that *form* of government. Not alone in enemy governments, but in those we think to save us, there is the naive belief in a form of government to remedy the constitutional evil of men. Notice the wild orgy of fanaticisms licking fiercely up around this or that type of ideology in our own time. We shall look in vain among great Elizabethan thinkers for anyone, who as we do, feels that you could build a perfect structure out of rotten timber and brittle bricks, or sagging steel. We shall look in vain for anyone even pretending to think in those days who would arrive at the impotent conclusion that a building architecturally perfect would after its completion somehow bring about a change for the better in the rottenness of the timber or the brittleness of the brick

it was built out of. Trinculo in *The Tempest* puts this in a nutshell when, thinking that he, Stephano, and Caliban are three of the five inhabitants of the island hoping to form a government according to their hearts' desire, he exclaims, "If the other two be brained like us, the state totters." The Elizabethans never forgot that the other two *are* furnished with just about the same brains as we are—by no means perfect. How many of us today can think so honestly and clearly? The Elizabethan would have realized, as we do not, that the Swiss and Swedish governments are as perfect as they are because great and good masses of individuals evolved these forms, are ready for them, are capable of administering them. They would have readily admitted as we will not, that if certain races and peoples should have these same forms of government superimposed on them that they should seek their own levels as to governmental forms within a decade. But above all they would never have concluded that any form of government could make a people happy and keep it so; they would have concluded that such could come only from the individual as he battles for the mastery of himself, of his own imperfect being. That any number of individuals, however large, incapable of self control as individuals, should evolve a form of government which could keep such individuals from reverting to beasts would have seemed to them unthinkable.

Elizabethans were agreed, as we are not, on *what is civilization* more or less definitely. Any force, educational or otherwise, which raised a man from beast to a god went to the making of a civilization. Unless the representative thinkers of the world can agree on *what is meant by civilization,* surely we cannot hope to attain it, and no one will contend that there is any such agreement now or in sight. We may be agreed as to some matters we consider to be *uncivilized,* now that we are forced in self-defense to employ ourselves the most atrocious methods of the uncivilized. We can agree on what Hitler, Mussolini, and Empire of the Rising Sun are doing as uncivilized. But as to having any clear cut notions of civilization as a positive rather than negative proposition, as compared with the Elizabethan thinkers, we haven't it. Surely what little there is of a posi-

tive conception of civilization implicit in the statements of our leading thinkers is hardly satisfying and convincing. What is it? What is this bright and suppositiously *new* world so often referred to just now as we get it in our vast schemes for post war planning? It seems to consist of little more than a very thoroughly controlled world in which peace is maintained by means of force, in which can be developed an infinite and never ending multiplication of mechanical gadgets for the gratification of the most luxury-loving of animals, man, to be exactly equally distributed among all, entirely irrespective of the ability or willingness of the differing individuals to sweat for them, or to appreciate them when given rather than acquired. The emphasis on rights to all things with no emphasis on fulfilling of obligations as a prerequisite to rights, it will be observed, has come to be somehow in vogue in all quarters. A world crammed to capacity with shinier and faster cars and planes, more delightfully upholstered Pullmans, every home equipped with radios irrespective of what comes through them and over them, every house above all painted, every child well shod despite the joys of bare-foot days. This is about all there is of definiteness in our conception of civilization. Whether the people who are to enjoy all this have any character, are cheaters in schools and colleges or not, people of gentleness, kindness, nobility of soul and the other attributes which raise us ever so little above our four-footed brethren, why all this has not a finger's weight in our scheme of civilization. What educator or leading thinker has dared to broach the subject of character being a prerequisite to rights, as Milton does: "Liberty, for who gets that must first be wise and good." Now the Elizabethans were just as childish in their delight in whatever luxuries and comforts they could lay their hands on then as we are now. But they didn't stop there. They realized that one may have everything available in that line and still be a beast. They knew as we do not, that men highly appreciative of all the arts and every beautiful thing with which they surround themselves, could sink below the level of the beast in ethics, alongside plain people preserving elements of character in cottages. There was the tremendous element of the mental wedded to the ethical in their conception of civilization. You can-

not find a great thinker of our time who insists upon the element of mentality or character as a *prerequisite to all these rights we talk about.* There is no program now being got ready by any leading thinker of the world placing emphasis on anything but the four freedoms, and the greatest of the four as we emphasize it is freedom from *want* of material comfort from cradle to the grave, for which we must give up our only idealistic freedom, the *individual freedom,*—to think, to argue, and utter freely above all freedoms.

Knowing human nature on the raw side and on its gentle side far more realistically than we do, they realized that no far-flung civilization could possibly come about without an actual change of heart, kindliness, human sympathy not simply for our own group or class but for all, gentleness, tenderness, sympathy and all the other qualities of a really civilized being (not simply an intellectual being) on the part of each and every one of us. And they realized as said before that somehow some individuals had the power within themselves to be superbly civilized when surrounded by the most obortive and uncivilized surroundings, that for men of courage, good taste, fineness, that the bright *old world* is always at hand if we have the sense to see it both without and within ourselves. Surely we of today need to place less faith in power of forms of government to make us happy, and to return to a philosophy of making civilized the inner man of each individual according to vastly differing capabilities of rising from our savage selves to the level of human beings.

These then are a few of Elizabethan points of view to which we of today concerned primarily with post war planning might very possibly return with profit to ourselves and to society at large.

408 E. Rosemary Street
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

[10]For the development of this idea as a background for this section, see Hardin Craig, *The Enchanted Glass,* Chapter VI, pp. 139-66.

[11]See for the pessimistic emphasis, D. C. Allen, "The Degeneration of Man and Renaissance Pessimism," *Studies in Philology,* 1938, 202-227.

We regret that in line 1 of Professor Taylor's essay "humanist" was misprinted "humorist".

THE FIRST AMERICAN PERFORMANCE OF *RICHARD II*

By Arthur Colby Sprague

AT a recent private sale of books from the library of the Edwin Forrest Lodge, in New York, I was able to obtain several valuable promptbooks. The chief prize was a *Richard II*. It was readily identifiable for, on the title page (the edition used was that of Wroughton's adaptation published in 1815) was written "Warren "[W.B."-deleted] Wood" and "Marked from Mr. Kean's book," and against the names of the *dramatis personae* stood those of a number of actors, headed by Wallack as Richard.[1]

Now *Richard II* was produced, for the first time in America, by Warren and Wood at the old Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, on January 22, 1819.[2] The newspaper *Aurora* announced the performance as follows:

PHILADELPHIA THEATRE,

MR. WALLACK'S EIGHTH NIGHT.

FRIDAY EVENING, JANUARY 22, 1819,

will be presented an Historical Play, never performed in America, called

KING RICHARD THE SECOND.

King Richard the Second	MR. WALLACK
Duke of York	MR. HUGHES
John of Gaunt	MR. WARREN
Bolingbroke	MR. WOOD
The Queen	MRS. DARLEY

The parts are similarly assigned in the promptbook, which includes also: Wheatley, as Northumberland; Darley, as Aumerle; T. Jeff[erson], as Harry Percy; Abercrombie, as Salisbury; Carter, as Ross; Scrivener, as Scroop; Hathwell, as Exton; Burke, as the First Gardener; Dennis, as the Groom; and Mrs. Jefferson, as Blanche.[3]

James William Wallack, "The Wallack," as he came to be called, was at this time a rising actor. Before leaving England for this, his first American tour, he had appeared on numerous occasions with Edmund Kean at Drury Lane; and when Kean played Richard in Wroughton's version, March 9, 1815, Wallack played Aumerle. That he should have brought with him a copy of the promptbook used on that occasion, is likely enough. Hence the allusion to "Mr. Kean's Book."[4]

Wallack's engagement, during which he had already appeared as Rolla, Hamlet, Macbeth, Coriolanus, Shylock, and Othello, was most successful. To Durang, years later, he still seemed "the most perfect general actor in his day."[5] A more discriminating critic, Westland Marston, found something of theatricality in Wallack's style. He excelled, Marston writes, in "characters that asked for bearing and dash;" and, though "spontaneous pathos" was not one of his gifts, "he could be very affecting. But one was touched chiefly by the manliness and fortitude of the actor, which gave even to a somewhat forced expression of feeling a value perhaps chiefly due to contrast."[6] It is to be hoped that in his conception of the present role he was not influenced by Kean, who had made Richard "a character of *passion* . . . whereas it is a character of *pathos*."[7]

In the other actors I have somewhat greater confidence. Wood, an accomplished and versatile performer, Wallack's Iago two days before, should have had no great difficulty with Bolingbroke. Nor could Warren, among whose best parts in tragedy were Acasto and Sciolto, have been miscast as old John of Gaunt.[8] Hughes (York) and J. Wheatley (Northumberland), the former from the Boston Theatre, the latter from the Theatre Royal, Dublin, had joined the company at the beginning of the season. Hughes is described by Durang as possessing "a noble figure, being fully six feet in height, and in just proportions. His features were of the Roman contour, large and expressive. In armor *cap-a-pie* [*sic*] he was a Mars, 'to threaten and command'; in regal robes a king; in a court suit, the dignified nobleman."[9] Wheatley, "a correct and sensible speaker," according to

Wood, "had in his acting a quaint solemnity of manner, often approaching to the ludricrous"[10]—a fact which did not escape notice from "the unreflecting wags of the box-lobbies." He was, even so, "a sensible actor, well-studied in the parts he professed to play, letter-perfect, and careful in any character he was called upon to assume."[11] As for the "Mr. Barrett," who did Norfolk, he was almost certainly the "Gentleman George" Barrett, famous in later years as a light comedian. The Darleys finally—John Darley, the Aumerle, and his wife, Richard's Queen—were widely known on the American stage. Dunlap says of the former that "his fine manly face gave him superiority to most who represented the second gentleman in drama."[12] Mrs. Darley (Ellen Westray) had made her American *début* in 1796.[13] Clapp, the historian of the Boston stage, writes of her that "to personal beauty and grace" she "united a delicacy that interested, and a naiveté that fascinated;"[14] and Durang assures us that "her tragedy, if not soaring to the highest flights of genius, was intensely pathetic, chaste, and discreetly personified. . . . She performed her duties with strict and conscientious attention, and never disappointed an audience by feigning sickness." [15] Among her other Shaksperian parts at this time were Portia (January 16), Desdemona (January 20), and Juliet (January 25).[16]

In adapting *Richard II* Wroughton, himself an actor, took Colley Cibber's *Richard III* as his model. In the first four acts he cut and slashed, indeed, but without destroying the outline of the original. Moreover, such additions as are introduced—usually at the endings of scenes—are made up of passages from neglected plays of Shakspere's own, *The Second Part of King Henry the Sixth* especially, *The Third Part, Titus Andronicus,* and *Antony and Cleopatra.* The largest gap is in the first act, where the encounter between Norfolk and Bolingbroke in the lists of Coventry is no longer even contemplated, Richard promptly banishing them both, in the opening scene, upon their refusal to be reconciled.

In Act V the York-Aumerle sub-plot is omitted, and what is left of V, 2, now precedes the parting of Richard and

his Queen (V, 1)—which is padded out with borrowings from the parting of Suffolk and Margaret in 2 *Henry VI*. Scene 3 is wholly recast. The Queen pleads with Bolingbroke for her husband's life. Bolingbroke repents and actually determines to give up his crown!

> These miseries are more than may be borne—
> Why, Richard, have I follow'd thee to this?
> Sated ambition! Nature's powerful voice
> Arrests thy arm, and thou must now submit.
> I'll follow to the Tower the wretched queen,
> And there with joy, with pleasure, will resign
> The rich advantage of my promis'd glory,
> If by the deed I can alleviate
> The bleeding sorrows of the royal pair,
> And, by restoring them their crown and dignity,
> Atone in small degree for all the horrors
> Which, O shame! they have endur'd through me.[17]

Richard, however, is still murdered by Exton, the Queen arriving just too late to save him. In lines once spoken by Lear over the body of Cordelia, she laments his death, then dies herself, and Bolingbroke closes the play:

> Through kingdoms by just titles prove our own,
> The subjects' hearts do best secure a crown.[18]

As for the prompt notes, they give a good idea of what the performance must have been like. Here are the obscure symbols and mysterious initials dear to collectors of such books: " W " for the prompter's whistle at the endings of scenes; "RING" at the endings of acts; "MB" for the music bell. Warren and Wood had been "happy to be the first to introduce the use of gas in lighting theatres in America," two seasons before;[19] but "1/3 dark" at the beginning of the Prison Scene is the only reference to lighting. Still further cuts were made in the text. Thus the Philadelphia managers seem at first to have thought of keeping III, 3 (Shakspere's III, 1), in which Bolingbroke condemns the King's favorites to death. The rolling of a muffled drum was to be introduced and officers were to enter with the prisoners "in Chains." Later, however, other counsels prevailed and

"Out this Scene" settled the matter. The quiet ending of the Garden Scene—

> Poor Queen, so that thy state might be no worse,
> I would my skill were subject to thy curse!
> Here did she fall a tear (etc.)—

also went by the board and, less regretably, the borrowed lines from *King Lear* in the last scene of all.[20] On the other hand, Richard's moving injunction to the Queen beginning,

> In winter's tedious nights sit by the fire
> With good old folks,

once marked for oblivion, was restored by the simple act of writing "in" against the lines. Finally, not only does the Queen enter "Before Richard dies," but also he exclaims "Ah. My Love. My Love. (*Makes a feeble effort to rise and meet her, but falls and dies*)."

The play was staged simply and without fuss. Richard's throne was discovered up center, at the beginning, with "Banners" and "4 Soldiers" on either side, a chair for Gaunt down stage, right, and another chair for York directly opposite. When, later in the play, Bolingbroke and his followers entered in arms against the King (II, 3), it was to a "March in the Orchestra," and "20 Soldiers" had been recruited. Wroughton, for some reason, had given up having Richard appear on the walls, in the Flint Castle Scene, nor in his version had the King descended to the base court. Warren and Wood, I am glad to say, provided "practicable Walls & Gates"; and, after Richard has spoken from the walls, "a long flourish" is called for "as the Gates of the Castle are opened and Richard's officers, Banners & Soldiers come out & form down on R. H. oppos. Bols party—Richard follows with Aumerle—Salisbu[ry] Carlisle & Scroop." Here certainly the American arrangement is closer to Shakspere's intention. Later, too, at the beginning of the Garden Scene, where Wroughton had caused the Queen to be discovered reclining *"on a Sopha within an Arbour; several Ladies attending,"* she now merely walked on with Blanche, her waiting-woman, and the only property called for is a "Garden Chair."

Details of stage business receive little attention. But Gaunt—"assisted by North. & York—rises and comes forwd," for the great "England" speech. Richard, fighting for his life, snatches a battle axe from one of Exton's men, rather than a sword.[21] In the Abdication Scene, two officers bring in the crown on a cushion and kneel with it between Richard and Henry. A little later, Richard "takes paper from North. & gazes on it." Seemingly, he then flung it away, for Northumberland "takes up the paper" (IV, 1, 253).[22] As for the glass, Wroughton's direction, *"Dashing it to the ground,"* is retained. (Hazlitt had criticized Kean for "dashing the glass down with all his might . . . instead of letting it fall out of his hands, as from an infant's").[23] But another of Wroughton's directions, *"Raising him"* at III, 3, 194, is scored through. Here Bolingbroke is kneeling before Richard.

> *Rich.* Up, cousin, up! Your heart is up I know,
> Thus high at least, although your knee be low.

"Thus high" will be explained by means of a gesture. But the promptbook does not tell us whether Wallack's Richard touched his own head or the crown he was still wearing.

---

[1]The annotations are almost certainly in Wood's hand and his signature is repeated on the first page of the text.

[2]The play was given for the first time in New York on February 27 (Odell, *Annals of the New York State,* ii, 530), and for the first time in Boston on March 17, when Wallack's Richard was highly praised in *The Columbian Centinel.*

[3]A recent farce, Penley's *Sleeping Draught,* concluded the evening, and curtain time was "quarter past 6 o'clock." The amount of the day's receipt ($515.) was below the average during Wallack's engagement (cf. Reese, D. James, *Old Drury of Philadelphia,* Philadelphia, 1932, pp. 272, 282).

[4]The final entry in Wood's promptbook is: "2 Hours. 45 Minutes—at D. L."

[5]"History of the Philadelphia Stage between the years 1749 and 1855" (collected articles from the Philadelphia *Sunday Dispatch*), series I, chap. lviii.

[6]*Our Recent Actors,* 2 vols., Boston, 1888, II, 300, 301.

[7]Hazlitt, *Criticisms and Dramatic Essays of the English Stage,* London, 1854, p. 220.

[8]Cf. W. B. Wood, *Personal Recollections of the Stage,* Philadelphia, 1855, pp. 327, 328. On January 30th, he played Henry VI to Wallack's Richard III.

[9]Durang, *Philadelphia Stage,* series I, chap. lvii.

[10]*Personal Recollections,* 226.

[11]Durang, *Philadelphia Stage,* series I, chap. lvii (Durang refers to him as "Mr. J. Wheatley, from the Lyceum and Dublin theatres").

[12]*History of the American Stage,* 2 vols., London, 1833, ii, 211.

[13]T. Allston Brown, *History of the American Stage,* New York [1870], p. 90.

[14]*A Record of the Boston Stage,* Boston and Cambridge, 1853, p. 50.

[15]*Philadelphia Stage,* series I, chap. lvii.

[16]*Aurora.* Of the other plays, enough perhaps that the two Jeffersons were Joseph Jefferson's wife and his eldest son, and that Burke (the Gardener) usually played comedy.

[17]Additional plays from which levies are drawn in these last scenes are *Troilus and Cressida* and *Richard III.*

[18]Wroughton's adaptation is discussed also by Genest, *Some Account of the English Stage,* viii, 451-455, Odell, *Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving,* ii, 72-75, and by Harold Child in J. Dover Wilson's edition of *Richard II.*

[19]James, *Old Drury of Philadelphia,* 27.

[20]Many other speeches wer cut and some minor characters, like Willoughby, were wholly deprived of their lines.

[21]Properties called for at the beginning of this scene are a straw bed, a "plain table," and a chair. The dish which the Keeper brings Richard has a cover. The keeper runs out when he is attacked.

[22]"Papers like Lawyer's briefs" are mentioned at the beginning of the prompt-book.

[23]*Op. cit.,* 220.

MR. DOVER WILSON, THE CRITICS AND FALSTAFF[1]

By Robert W. Babcock

MR. WILSON'S latest book, *The Fortunes of Falstaff* (Camb. Univ. Press, 1943; Macmillan, 1944) has had many favorable reviews and is probably without doubt the author's best book to date. It has many good qualities, not the least its buoyant enthusiasm, and even its faults, generally less serious than those in Mr. Wilson's previous books, arise from a growth in scholarly co-operation that is extremely impressive. Nevertheless, the problem is to render Mr. Wilson even better yet—to improve him, if possible, for the benefit of all Shaksperian scholars. And the present paper will attempt to do just this, in a mild way and without much resort to formal scholarship. We hope that, inasmuch as Mr. Wilson has now discovered the American Kittredge—whose work had been pointed out to him in previous reviews—he will now continue his discovery of American scholars and finally evince an even greater spirit of international co-operation—a spirit which he has already agreeably shown in the present book by his gracious references to the Americans, H. D. Gray[2] and H. Hartman.[3]

I shall make no attempt to summarize *The Fortunes of Falstaff* in detail. I have done it elsewhere (in the *Philological Quarterly*[4]), and it will be assumed that the reader of this article knows the contents of the book pretty thoroughly. At the moment I happen to have in my possession both the page proof and the final copy of the book, and a comparison of these two texts is revelatory in some minor points. But my chief purpose is merely to discuss various aspects of the book—good and bad, or perhaps I should say bad and good—in order to throw light on Mr. Wilson's present progress in the field of Shaksperian scholarship, with reference to both his predecessors and his contemporaries. These points will be the following: (1) Mr. Wilson's debts to other critics; (2) Mr. Wilson and Samuel Johnson; (3) Mr. Wilson and A. C. Bradley; (4) Mr. Wilson and Mr. Stoll; (5) Mr. Wilson's possible inconsistencies and

errors; (6) the page proof and the final copy; (7) Mr. Wilson's redeeming qualities; and (8) the conclusion: some suggestions for the future. As the book has no index, specific pages will be given whenever advisable.

1. MR. WILSON AND THE CRITICS.

As an unhappy relic of his previous books—and a quality soon to be eliminated, we hope—Mr. Wilson is inclined to reiterate, often, that he is the *only* critic who has discovered something about Shakspere—or at least the only one but *one!* The number of times this idea appears in *The Fortunes of Falstaff* is rather astonishing: I counted personally about twenty-five such instances,[5] though Mr. Wilson insists that he is merely offering "a modest contribution to this symposium"[6] (*i.e.,* conferences of modern players and modern scholars). For example, here are some illustrations of Mr. Wilson's, shall we say, overbalanced personal enthusiasm: "In the first place, the critics are, as usual, reading the play backwards";[7] ". . . all the critics seem to have missed it";[8] "The critics, blind to all this, have with one exception been equally blind to what follows";[9] ". . . no commentator seems to have noticed it, except Johnson";[10] "As the editor of *Henry IV* in the 'Arden Shakespeare' . . . seems to have been the first to set the matter in its true light";[11] etc., etc. Of course Mr. Wilson is hedging pretty carefully with his verbiage ("seems"), but the fact remains that the continuous repetition of this one-and-only motif shows Mr. Wilson is fairly well satisfied with himself—or perhaps with one other critic who happens to be as bright as he. And this sort of attitude is always extremely dangerous, as we shall very presently see.

It is true that in this book, more than in any other book he has written, the Cambridge Editor has tried to be very scrupulous about giving to previous critics recognition for any particular idea he may be developing about Falstaff, Prince Hal, etc.—that is, within the limits of his knowledge. And nobody, I suppose, can be expected to cover the whole field of Shaksperian scholarship at the present day on any given subject: those happy days are gone forever. But as an

American I believe I should simply point out that Mr. Wilson has a grave inclination, together with other British scholars (the worst one perhaps is Montague Summers) to ignore or, better, to fail to search for American scholarship, and that is no way for a modern scholar to promote the Grand Alliance of our two nations at the end of this war!

In his page proof, for instance, Mr. Wilson directly refers to 43 critics whom he has used in some way or other —24 in the text itself and 19 in the Notes at the back. (As a matter of fact he uses only few of these very much—Johnson, Morgann, Hudson, Bradley, Stoll, Kittredge, Bailey, Charlton). Of these 43 only 5, I think, are Americans: Kittredge, Stoll, Tolman, H. D. Gray and H. Hartman. (To the latter two Mr. Wilson gives special, individual tribute.) In the final version of his book Mr. Wilson has added references to 3 more new critics, one of whom (W. W. Lawrence) is an American. Total Americans now: 6 out of 46. This seems a rather incredible proportion, and as we shall note below, some excellent American scholarship Mr. Wilson has completely ignored, or perhaps never heard of. I should add, too, that as far as Mr. Stoll is concerned, Mr. Wilson spends most of the space devoted to this American mainly in sneering at him, though, as I have pointed out in a previous review,[12] the Cambridge Editor does not hesitate, apparently, to use some of Mr. Stoll's ideas at times, without the slightest recognition. That cuts us down, really, to 5 Americans used instead of 6.

The question that comes up now is; whom does Mr. Wilson *omit,* both with reference to ideas which he admits at least one critic has had and with reference to ideas that he claims as brand new—*i.e., his own* and no one else's? Here we can merely make some suggestions—*indicative* suggestions—for the full story can never be told by any one historian of ideas on Shakspere: the field of Shaksperian scholarship is now far too broad for the encompassment of any one subject by any one man.

Let's take some of Mr. Wilson's basic ideas first. For instance, his fundamental concept for the whole book is the *medieval* background of Shakspere's *Henry IV,* Parts I and II, wherein Riot or Vanity or Vice (Falstaff) fights Virtue or Law (the Chief Justice) for the soul of the Prodi-

gal (Prince Hal), and loses at the end (of Part II) as he always did in the Morality Plays.[13] The origin of this idea Mr. Wilson assigns solely to his ex-partner, the late Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, who proposed it, says Mr. Wilson, in 1918.[14] But, as a matter of fact, the idea was developed by at least three Americans, too: J. W. Spargo in Washington Univ. *Studies,* in 1922, Prof. R. A. Law in *Studies in Philology* in April, 1927, and, in summary, by J. W. Shirley in the *Philological Quarterly* in July, 1938. And Mr. Wilson never mentions any one of them anywhere. Mr. Law almost anticipates Mr. Wilson word for word: "We have already alluded to the fact that the struggle that chiefly concerns us in this story is not between the King, or the Prince, and any or all of the rebels, as in the *First Part.* It is between the Chief Justice and the royal household on one side, and Sir John Falstaff on the other. And the theme of dispute is the person of the future King."[15] He even "gives" Mr. Wilson the title of his book when he writes: "Thus the play turns chiefly on the fortunes of Falstaff . . . ",[16] and the title of the Texas Professor's article shows he is doing precisely what Mr. Wilson is doing in *The Fortunes of Falstaff:* "Structural Unity in the Two Parts of *Henry the Fourth*". Incidentally, both Samuel Johnson (whom Mr. Wilson adores) and Mr. Stoll (whom Mr. Wilson deplores) referred to this Vice idea in connection with Falstaff. And this whole medieval-background *method* which Mr. Wilson uses was originally developed by the American W. W. Lawrence in *Shakespeare's Problem Comedies,* but even after adding Mr. Lawrence's name in a footnote[17] (*not* in the page proof), Mr. Wilson never at all acknowledges that Mr. Lawrence anticipated the whole method of development in *The Fortunes of Falstaff.*

Other basic ideas of Mr. Wilson could be traced to a background, often in American scholarship, beyond that which Mr. Wilson has assigned solely to Bradley, but we have little space for such detailed diversions. For example, however, the rapid deterioration of Falstaff in Part II has been pointed out by many critics: Cowl (1926-7), Stoll (1927), Murry (1936), Ridley (1938), Charlton 1938),[18] etc. That Falstaff got away from his creator, Shakspere, has been indicated by Bailey (1916), Alden (1922), Tolman

(1925), Stoll (1927), Harrison (1927), as well as by Bradley. Mr. Wilson's comic-spirit (à la Meredith) idea appeared in both E. K. Chambers (1925) and Bradley.[19] Similarly Giles (1851) preceded Bradley, and Tolman (1925) and Cazamian (1934) have followed Bradley in proposing Falstaff's conscious artistry in his lying after Gadshill. So much for a few hints as to the general scope of ideas that Mr. Wilson has assigned almost exclusively to Bradley.

We come now to the ideas that Mr. Wilson has claimed as essentially his own but which really do have some background in previous criticism. He writes, for instance, "Shakespeare none the less contrives to associate him [Falstaff] perpetually with appetizing food by means of the imagery that plays about his person."[20] One expects Mr. Wilson, in the notes at least, to refer this imagery-idea to Miss Spurgeon, but I do not recall that he ever does. Miss Spurgeon was certainly ahead of him here, and she even adds: ". . . I believe that, in the course of the two plays [*Henry IV*, Parts I and II], Shakespeare definitely pictured a certain deterioration of spirit in the fat knight which is subtly reflected in his images.[21] And again, Mr. Wilson very naively explains to us: "The soliloquy, itself an outworn convention to us, is in this instance more than usually obsolete, since it belongs to what may be called the expository type. . . . Its function was to convey information to the audience about the general drift of the play . . ."[22] Not a word of credit here, at the end of this little lesson, to either Schücking or Stoll, who have both produced specialized studies of the Elizaebthan soliloquies. Similarly, all of Mr. Wilson's very interesting emphasis on actor-business in connection with the play—to be discussed more fully in section 7 below—owes something certainly to the *Prefaces* of Mr. Granville-Barker, who is never mentioned in the book. And again, Mr. Wilson finally falls back on the idea of a dual-Falstaff[23] and adds that a good actor can quite successfully portray both at once.[24] Many other critics have implied or pointed out a dual-Falstaff (quite irrespective of the third one, probably, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*): (1) followers of Morgann, such as Bradley (1909), Cazamian (1934), Charlton (1938) and Kittredge (1940), and (2) the histori-

cal-sceptics such as Bradby (1929), Draper (1932), Shirley (1928) and Stoll (1927, 1940)—but I shall point out below that there is a distinct difference in the points of view of these two groups. Mr. Stoll will have nothing to do with Morgann's transcendental discovery of a secret Falstaff beneath the visible rogue, and that is precisely where Mr. Stoll and Mr. Wilson part company, violently.

Similarly, Mr. Wilson is very proud of his idea that Falstaff is not so much the comic butt as "the Old Soldier on the make",[25] though this would seem to be a rather nice distinction in itself. Well, Mr. M. R. Ridley in 1938 said that Falstaff was "more obviously the hard-bitten professional soldier and less the universal humourist"[26] in Part II of *Henry IV*. Then, too, the whole build-up to and acceptance of the rejection scene, the core of Mr. Wilson's book—with the medieval theme mentioned above as the substantial texture around this core—have been more or less anticipated by such twentieth century critics as Tolman (1925), Harrison (1927), Stoll (1927), Bradby (1929) and Fripp (1930). Bradby wrote, "It is difficult to believe that Shakespeare really intended to invest his fat knight with any element of pathos. The Elizabethans were not sentimental about fat men, and a tragic Falstaff would have been a violation of stage tradition."[27] And Mr. Fripp rather anticipates the whole of Mr. Wilson's argument with his conclusion that Falstaff "deliberately takes 'the primrose path to the Everlasting Bonfire' and steadily deteriorates . . . until . . . we are relieved rather than pained or surprised by the young King's decisive rejection of the dissolute old roué."[28] This was written fourteen years ago and goes even beyond Mr. Wilson!

Of course the whole "coward" problem is a tremendous study in itself, perhaps far beyond the scope of Mr. Wilson's small book. But he does definitely mention it and then skips completely over it, naming only Morgann, Bradley and Kittredge in connection with it. He seems convinced, at first, that the fat Knight *is* a coward[29] (in 1932 he called Falstaff "a liar, a sot, a coward, and a whoremonger");[30] but, a few pages later, as we shall see below, he reverses himself and finds another underlying Falstaff, who is really not a coward at all.[31] (I shall take up this peculiar duality

later.) Meanwhile, however, if one could definitely and decisively pronounce Falstaff an out-and-out coward, from the Gadshill scene of Part I straight through the end of Part II—as Mr. Stoll attempts to do—then Mr. Wilson's plea for our acceptance of the rejection scene would be even more effective. And so the question *is* important, as Mr. Stoll has pointed out to Mr. Priestley.[32] But look what Mr. Wilson was up against—here is just a casual and probably somewhat inaccurate and inadequate outline[33] of the struggle, with the main "heroes" listed on each side in this modern "battle of the books":

Pro-Cowardice

Margaret Cavendish (1664)
Fuller (1662) Spence (1685)
Dryden (1668, 1679)
Oldmixon (1700)
Rowe (1709)
Addison (1711)
Theobald (1750)
Morris (1744)
Upton (1746)
Johnson (1765)
Mrs. Montagu (1769)
Kenrick (1773)
Baretti (1777)
Davies (1784)
Cumberland (1786)
Stack (1788)
W. Richardson (1789)
Schlegel, A. W. (1811)
Hazlitt (1817)
Gervinus (1849)
Mézières (1860)
Mabie (1900)
Rusden (1870, 1903)
Tolstoy (1907)
Courthope (1911)
Stoll (1914, 1927, 1940, 1944)
Krapp (1916)
W. L. George (1918)
L. K. Chambers (1925)
Jeans (1927)
Bailey (1929)
Fripp (1930)
Dover Wilson (1932)
Shirley (1938), etc.

Anti-Cowardice

Morgann (1777)
Mackenzie (1786)
Coleridge (1808)
McGinn (1838-9)
Ulrici (1839 ff.)
Giles (1851)
Jacox (1875)
Dowden (1881)
Hudson (1883)
Swinburne (1895)
Bradley (1909)
Chandler (1911)
S. Brooke (1913)
H. T. Baker (1919)
Knowlton (1926)
Harrison (1927)
Cazamian (1934)
Charlton (1938)
Kittredge (of all people!) (1940)
(1940)
H. Spencer (1940)

I happen to be, supposedly, a specialist in early Shaksperian criticism, so that is why this rapidly jotted-down list is top-heavy probably in the wrong direction—but the fact remains that, in the light of these many names, Mr. Wilson would have had his hands full had he elected to discuss this two-century-old problem. He chose to solve it rather abruptly by his remark: "A good actor . . . is perfectly capable to exhibiting extreme terror and complete self-possession at one and the same time."[34] And even this ingenious solution had been practically anticipated by Mr. Duthie's assertion in 1931: "Dramatically the contradiction does not exist."[35]

And, finally, what is Mr. Wilson going to do about the whole list of historical critics merely hinted at above? Some of these men deal with Falstaff generally, some more specifically; some believe he is a burlesque of an actual individual; some reject this. Consider them:

On Falstaff and the general historical background:
Cunliffe (1916), Knowlton (1926), Shirley (1938), etc.

Falstaff as possible parody of his times:
Ulrici (1846 ff.), Rötscher (1864), Draper (1932).

Falstaff as parody of an individual:
Dawtrey (1927), C. Clark (1935), G. W. Phillips (1937), Maxwell (1930).

Falstaff as an Elizabethan type:
Monaghan (1921)—F. as clown; Stoll (1914, 1927, 1940, 1944)—F. as *miles gloriosus* (mainly); Vandiver (1935)—F. as parasite.

Of these 13 critics—a purely suggestive list—Mr. Wilson mentions only 2: Stoll, at some length, and Rötscher, in a footnote added on p. 143 (it was not in the page proof). It seems as if some of these scholars might have fitted into Mr. Wilson's scheme somewhere, and many of them, may I suggest again? are Americans.

This first section of mine has already got abnormally long, but I think it is probably the most important. Mr. Wilson must be asked to be even more generous to preceding scholars—especially Americans—who have definitely anticipated his ideas. He could have easily picked up the critics I have mentioned above as unknown to him simply by a glance at the basic Shaksperian bibliographies: Jaggard

(1911), Ebisch and Schücking (1931 and 1937), Hardin Craig's famous *SP* bibliography (which began in 1917), and Dr. S. A. Tannenbaum's very valuable annual bibliography in each January number of the *Shakespeare Assoc. Bulletin* (this bibliography began in 1926). Then the final proportion might not have been 5 Americans out of 46! And then, too, there would not have been so much emphasis on the discovery of *new ideas* or the "unique source" (as Morize calls it). For one of my recent graduate students, Mr. Morris Samsky—now a warrant officer on New Guinea and a great pleader for Camels—a few years ago wrote for me an excellent thesis on Falstaff, in which he, too, deliberately, with my permission, evaded the awful cowardice problem. In the first section of his thesis, a section which was entitled "Comments on Shakespeare's Artistry in Characterizing Falstaff", he came up with 79 different critics, from 1646 to 1938, and of these 79 Mr. Wilson mentions only 18, including himself (as of 1932). Of course this topic that these critics were discussing is not precisely the same as the Cambridge Editor's, but somewhere in those other 61 there may well be *other* anticipations of the ideas in *The Fortunes of Falstaff*. And out of the long lists in the above basic Shaksperian bibliographies I have chosen a dozen others whose titles indicate that they may also have anticipated some of Mr. Wilson's ideas. Some of them actually did—and so did some of Mr. Samsky's—for I've used them above in this section. To be sure, then, the task of the Shaksperian scholar today is endless. He faces youth in the form of new theses being turned out each year—especially in *America*—and age in the form of all the old bibliographies which he must peruse. Let him therefore hesitate a long time before he announces anyone of his pet discoveries as quite *new!*

2. MR. WILSON AND SAMUEL JOHNSON.

In his first chapter, and a few times thereafter,[36] Mr. Wilson has invoked Samuel Johnson as his great critical muse. Like most invocations the tribute is idolatrous, and to a large extent it is, of course, quite deserved. But Mr. Wilson is not always completely poised in the matter of Johnson's attitude toward the two *Henry IV* plays and Falstaff. He

uses Johnson's ideas where they happen to fit his purpose at the moment, but he evades some of Johnson's remarks that would definitely contradict his purpose. So this is not altogether a wholesome picture.

To begin with, he announces in his typically self-satisfied manner: "So unobtrusive are his [Johnson's] comments that their general purport has passed practically unnoticed ever since."[37] This is one of his regular, dangerous, generalizing clichés, noted above, for actually Sir Walter Raleigh did a complete book (in 1908) on Johnson's attitude toward Shakspere, and the late Karl Young produced a long monograph in 1923 on Johnson's historical criticism of Shakspere. And these are only two items that might well be merely the starting point of a long list. The fact remains, too, that some of Johnson's comments have remained so unobtrusive that Mr. Wilson apparently never even saw them himself.

Obviously he likes Johnson's matter-of-fact sanity in contrast to the romantic Morgann, whose famous piece on Falstaff appeared twelve years after Johnson's 1765 edition. He prints Johnson's summaries of the characters of the Prince and Falstaff,[38] and he even risks his own goal by adding Johnson's typical moralistic conclusion to his 18th century summary of the two characters.[39] So far so good. Johnson was certainly not romantic, and his amusing comment on Morgann's idea of Falstaff Mr. Wilson should certainly have reprinted. But the Cambridge Editor isn't satisfied to drop the matter here. He lapses into the romantic trend of criticism himself—a trend he castigates bluntly in Morgann and Hazlitt[40]—by crying out, "To Johnson . . . the character was far too much like his own! In bulk . . . in his love for the pleasures of the table . . . in his intellectual brilliance . . . in his talking for victory . . . Johnson bears a remarkable likeness to Falstaff"![41] That is, Johnson understands, appreciates and interprets Falstaff so enthusiastically because he *sees himself in Falstaff!* This is turning Johnson romantically inside out, as it were. But, really, Johnson lambasted Falstaff verbally in another spot which Mr. Wilson actually reprints faithfully some one hundred pages later.[42] And if Falstaff is a man "of mean shifts",[43] a "sharper",[43] an "old

scoundrel",[43] "an aged roué",[44] as Mr. Wilson says he is, or, as Mr. Wilson remarked earlier, "a liar, a sot, a coward, and a whoremonger",[45] *would* Johnson be particularly pleased at the spectacle of himself in such a mirror,

As for the Prince, Mr. Wilson quotes *one* of Johnson's remarks about him[46]—the least harmful because Mr. Wilson has set out to give the Prince quite a build-up for the rejection scene—but he omits the other remarks Johnson made that are of a somewhat different tenor. (Incidentally, Johnson says not a word of praise for the Prince in the whole of *Henry IV,* Part I.) The remark Mr. Wilson quoted came at the end of Part II, but before that Johnson had written: "The second [Part] he [Upton] tells us, shews Henry the *fifth* in the various lights of a good-natured rake, till, on his father's death, he assumes a more manly character. *This is true* . . ."[47] (My italics.) Where Mr. Wilson goes into some rhapsodies over Vernon's character of the Prince,[48] Johnson's comment applies to only *one line*[49] (on "estridges") and *not* to the whole speech, as Mr. Wilson implies by his footnote; where Mr. Wilson continues his rhapsody,[49a] this time over Vernon's second speech (about the challenge from the Prince), Johnson objects to Vernon's lines as impossible unless "some lines" have been "lost from the prince's speech"![49b] Where Mr. Wilson goes into more rhapsodies over the Prince's lines over the dead Hotspur,[50] Johnson's only comment is, "He rather covers his face with a scarf to hide the ghastliness of death."[51] And, finally, where Mr. Wilson goes into his greatest rhapsodies, over the Prince's reply to his father in the famous reconciliation scene,[52] Johnson calmly remarks: ". . . and the answer which the prince makes, and which is applauded for wisdom, is not of a strain much higher than this ejected line"![53] Even worse that this, under *Henry V,* Johnson complains: "I know not why *Shakespeare* now gives the King nearly such a character as he made him formerly ridicule in *Percy.* This military grossness and unskilfulness in all the softer arts, does not suit very well with the gaieties of his youth."[54] Johnson has now gone a step beyond Mr. Wilson: the Henry of *Henry V* and Prince Hal of *Henry IV,* he says are *two different* men, as Mr. Kittredge used to drive home so forcibly in class. But,

to sum up, Johnson's picture of the Prince (and later King) is not nearly so beautiful as Mr. Wilson would have us believe, on the strength of a single effective quotation.

Another aspect of Johnson's criticism which Mr. Wilson completely ignores I shall take up in my conclusion, but one more rather embarrassing aspect of Johnson still remains —that is, embarrassing for Mr. Wilson, I think. Much as he berates Mr. Stoll for supposedly considering the Falstaff of the *Merry Wives of Windsor* the same man as the Falstaff of the *Henry IV* plays, he should note that Johnson himself shows none of Mr. Wilson's perspicuity: Johnson merely wants the *Merry Wives* read between *Henry IV* and *Henry V*[55] and writes not a single note on Falstaff in the whole of the *Merry Wives*. From his quoting of the Theobald note[56] one might even gather that he believed the two Falstaffs to be one and the same! I leave Johnson now for the reader (and Mr. Wilson) to ponder over; but I shall return to him later, at the end of this paper.

3. MR. WILSON AND A. C. BRADLEY.

To make a transition now to A. C. Bradley, may I quote two sentences from Chapter I of Mr. Wilson's book? "Yet Johnson's six sentences tell us more about Shakespeare's Falstaff . . . than is to be found in Bradley's twenty-seven eloquent pages. Indeed, the subject that engages Bradley, you will observe, is not Falstaff at all, but the effect of Falstaff upon himself; upon that shy, gentle, refined, subtle, hypersensitive, entirely moral, almost other-worldly personality, at once donnish, a little old-maidish, and extraordinarily winning . . . with his frail figure and tender smile."[57] From these remarks one might conclude that Mr. Wilson does not wholly approve of Bradley's attitude toward Falstaff. Yet the Preface to *The Fortunes of Falstaff* —which of course was not at all in the page proof (from which I originally wrote my review for the *PQ*—remarks: "But my chief creditor, without a doubt, is Andrew Bradley . . . he remains . . . the greatest of modern Shakesperian critics."[58] By this time the reader may be a bit confused, but the fact is that the Preface is much nearer the truth than the peculiar quotation from Chapter I.

For Bradley actually anticipated most of Mr. Wilson's ideas. I have already indicated above a few of these. Let's try a few more here—perhaps more basic ones. For instance, with regard to the final rejection, Bradley says that we are surprised by Henry's act, but "if we had read his character truly in the light that Shakespeare gave us, we should have been prepared for a display both of hardness and of policy at this point in his career."[59] *Exactly* what Mr. Wilson attempts to prove.[60] "And", continues Bradley, "hence it follows that he [Shakspere] must have intended our sympathy with Falstaff to be so far weakened when the rejection-scene arrives that his discomfiture should be satisfactory to us."[61] *Precisely* what Mr. Wilson tries to prove![62] Bradley also anticipates the Cambridge Editor's "comic-hubris" idea with the word "haughtiness"[63] (applied to Falstaff), and other anticipations of Mr. Wilson by Bradley I have listed above. In general, I think it may be said that the core of Mr. Wilson's argument is all in Bradley, and hence the tribute to Bradley in the Preface is well deserved.

On the other side, Mr. Wilson reacts against Bradley as a modern critic generally would. He doesn't like Bradley's failure to follow the "dramatic order", though as a matter of fact he doesn't always follow it himself.[64] He doesn't approve of Bradley's personal, romantic point of view, especially in declining to accept Falstaff as a coward, but he himself falls into the dual-Falstaff complex—*i.e.,* he sees what Mr. Stoll would call an esoteric Falstaff *beneath* the exoteric:[65] he talks about the "sub-insinuated[66] impressions" he has of Falstaff and ends with, ". . . he is in no real sense a coward at all"![67] This is out-Morganning Morgann! (I shall return to this later.) Mr. Wilson also disapproves of Bradley's taking Falstaff out of the text and treating a living individual, but he does the same thing himself.[68] The only place I can see where Mr. Wilson does have Bradley on the hip is in the matter of greater historical knowledge—with regard to the Fleet,[69] for instance. And, finally, here are a few ideas of Bradley's that Mr. Wilson might well have pondered for his own use: (1) Bradley's illuminating remark on Johnson's criticism,[70] (2) Bradley's discussion of the different Henry V[71] (*i.e.,* different from

Hal), and finally, (3) an idea for which Mr. Wilson gives Mr. Stoll no credit either: ". . . in the creation of Falstaff he [Shakspere] overreached himself."[72] Basically, to repeat, Mr. Wilson's prefactory tribute to Bradley is far nearer the right emphasis than his rather condescending comment in Chapter I, quoted above.

(To be concluded)

---

[1]This is a long article, far longer than I intended it to be. But Mr. Wilson's book was stimulating, in many ways. I propose, now, in order to save valuable paper, to introduce a new idea in footnotes. Whenever possible, I shall merely put a date after a man's name in parentheses in the text to indicate the year of production of his work concerned with the point in question. Then a glance at the basic Shaksperian bibliographies (Jaggard, Ebisch and Schücking, *SP* and *SAB*), under the proper year, will give the reader the title of the work, if desired. However, the page references to Mr. Wilson's book itself, which has no index, will always be specifically given.

[2]P. 124.

[3]Pp. 66 and 137.

[4]April, 1944.

[5]Pp. 2, 3, 5, 11-2, 26, 28, 38, 41, 44, 45, 54, 68, 70, 73, 88, 90 (twice), 97, 99, 103, 105, 119, 137, 138, 143.

[6]P. 98.

[7]P. 45.

[8]P. 88.

[9]P. 90.

[10]P. 103.

[11]P. 119.

[12]*Shakespeare Assoc. Bulletin,* July, 1936.

[13]Chap. II, and pp. 39, 75, 99, 103, 117, 131, 136.

[14]P. 131.

[14a]May I add, for instance, the American Theodore Spencer, *Shapespeare and the Nature of Man* (1942), pp. 77 and 77n. Mr. Spencer refers to both Mr. Law and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch.

[15]*SP,* XXIV (April, 1927), 237.

[16]*Ibid.,* p. 232.

[17]P. 132.

[18]See footnote 1 above for method to be used to ascertain titles of works, the dates of which I have given in parentheses in the text.

[19]To say nothing of H. Spencer (1940), p. 182.

[20]P. 27.

[21]*Shakespeare's Imagery* . . . (Macmillan, 1936), p. 379.

[22]P. 41.

[23]Pp. 58, 90.

[24]P. 46.

[25]P. 84.

[26]*Shakespeare's Plays* (N. Y., 1938), p. 101.

[27]*Shakespeare Studies* (Macmillan, 1929), p. 67.

[28]*Shakespeare Studies* (Oxford U., 1930), p. 147.

[29]P. 45.

[30]*The Essential Shaespeare* (Cambridge, England, 1932), p. 87.

[31]P. 48.

[32]*Shakespeare and Other Masters* (Harvard, 1940), pp. 355 n.

[33]I have been helped here, of course, by Mr. Stoll's lists on pp. 407, 354-5, and 206-15 of his 1927, 1940 and 1944 books, respectively; by J. W. Shirley's article in the Philological Quarterly, XVII (July, 1938), 271-87; and by my own book, *The Genesis of Shakespeare Idolatry* (Chapel Hill, 1931). Mr. Stoll would add Malone to his right-hand column, but I cannot discover where he got this idea, unless from Malone's persistent quoting of Johnson. (Mr. Stoll gives no references.)

[34]P. 46.

[35]"The Incongruous in Falstaff", *Queen's Quarterly,* XXXVIII (Summer, 1931), '04.

[36]Pp. 103 and 122.

[37]P. 2.

[38]Pp. 8 and 12.

[39]P. 14.

[40]Pp. 6, 111.

[41]P. 13.

[42]P. 122.

[43]P. 98.

[44]P. 107.

[45]*Op. cit.* (1932), p. 87.

[46]P. 8.

[47]*Edition* (1765), IV, 265.

[48]P. 65 (top).

[49]*Op. cit.* (1765), IV, 199.

[49a]P. 65 (bottom).

[50]P. 66.

[49b]*Op. cit.* (1765, p. 217. See my section 8 below for the full remark.

[50]P. 66.

[51]*Op. cit.* (1765), IV, 226.

[52]P. 78.

[53]*Op. cit.* (1765), IV, 331.

[54]*Ibid.,* IV, 479.

[55]*Ibid.,* IV, 397.

[56]*Ibid.,* IV, 451.

[57]P. 13.

[58]P. vii.

[59]*Lectures* (1909), p. 254.

[60]Pp. 69, 80.

[61]P. 259.

[62]In Chap. V.

[63]*Op. cit.* p. 269.

[64]See pp. 80-2, 114.

[65]*Op. cit.* (1940), p. 294.

[66]P. 48.

[67]P. 48.

[68]Pp. 48-9.

[69]Pp. 118-9.

[70]*Op. cit.* (1909), p. 255.

[71]*Ibid.,* p. 257.

[72]*Ibid.,* p. 273.

Compare the American O. J. Campbell on Isabella in *Shakespeare's Satire* (Oxf. 1943), p. 125.

LONGFELLOW, LANIER, BOKER and *KING LEAR*

By Edward P. Vandiver, Jr.

THREE important American poets of the nineteenth century have used part of Shakspere's *King Lear* in their poetry. Each poet has used the old-father-and-the-ministering-daughter motif figuratively to make his poem more impressive.

In Longfellow's first published volume of poetry (*Voices of the Night,* 1839) is a poem entitled "Midnight Mass for the Dying Year." The old dying year is Lear; the last bright day of the year is Cordelia; then comes the night of death. The Shaksperian imagery and phraseology may be illustrated by the following lines:

Yes, the Year is growing old,
And his eye is pale and blear'd!
Death, with frosty hand and cold,
Plucks the old man by the beard,
Sorely — sorely!

There he stands in the foul weather,
The foolish, fond Old Year,
Crown'd with wild flowers and with heather,
Like weak, despisëd Lear,
A king — a king!

Then comes the summer-like day,
Bids the old man rejoice!
His joy! his last! Oh, the old man gray
Loveth that ever-soft voice,
Gentle and low.

To the crimson woods he saith,
To the voice, gentle and low,
Of the soft air, like a daughter's breath,
"Pray do not mock me so!—
Do not laugh at me!"

And now the sweet day is dead!
Cold in his arm it lies;
No stain from its breath is spread
Over the glassy skies,
No mist or stain!

Then, too, the Old Year dieth,
And the forests utter a moan,
Like the voice of one who crieth
In the wildnerness alone,
"Vex not his ghost!"

In Sidney Lanier's "Corn" (1874) the gaunt old hill is Lear; Spring is Cordelia:

Yon old deserted Georgian hill
Bares to the sun his piteous agëd crest
And seamy breast,
By restless-hearted children left to lie
Untended there beneath the heedless sky. . . .
Old hill! old hill! thou gash'd and hairy Lear
Whom the divine Cordelia of the year,
E'en pitying Spring, will vainly strive to cheer—
King, that no subject man nor beast may own,
Discrown'd, undaughter'd and alone—
Yet shall the great God turn thy fate,
And bring thee back into thy monarch state
And majesty immaculate.

The most interesting use of the Lear-Cordelia story, however, appears in two sonnets written by George Henry Boker. Here England is Lear. America, whom England has treated cruelly in the past but whose help she now sorely needs, is Cordelia. The especial significance of the sonnets now is their utterance of a theme which is peculiarly appropriate at the present time. Written by Boker (1823-1890), poet, dramatist, and minister to Turkey and Russia, they paint an idealistic picture of what England, aided by America, not only could do for the cause of liberty in the nineteenth century but also can do today:

I

Lear and Cordelia! 'twas an ancient tale
Before thy Shakespeare gave it deathless fame;
The times have chang'd, the moral is the same.
So like an outcast, dowerless and pale,
Thy daughter went; and in a foreign gale
Spread her young banner, till its sway became
A wonder to the nations. Days of shame
Are close upon thee; prophets raise their wail.
When the rude Cossack with an outstretch'd hand
Points his long spear across the narrow sea—

"Lo! there is England!" when thy destiny
Storms on thy straw-crown'd head, thou dost stand
Weak, helpless, mad, a by-word in the land—
God grant thy daughter a Cordelia be!

II

Stand, thou great bulwark of man's liberty!
Thou rock of shelter, rising from the wave,
Sole refuge to the overweari'd brave
Who plann'd, arose, and battled to be free,
Fell, undeterr'd, then sadly turn'd to thee—
Sav'd the free spirit from their country's grave,
To rise again, and animate the slave,
When God shall ripen all things. Britons, ye
Who guard the sacred outpost, not in vain
Hold your proud peril! Freemen undefiled,
Keep watch and ward! Let battlements be piled
Around your cliffs; fleets marshall'd, till the main
Sink under them; and if your courage wanes,
Through force or fraud, look westward to your child!

312 North McDuff Street, Anderson, N. C.

PSYCHOLOGY IN *OTHELLO*

By Brents Stirling

THE interpretation of *Othello* which follows is not necessarily in conflict with other points of view which admit some kind of psychological basis for the play. If, for example, such explanations as Bradley's or those based upon Elizabethan psychology are offered as objections, the answer must be that they may be used to amplify the present interpretation, which is not meant to stand as a complete account of *Othello*. It is meant, rather, to deal exclusively with the psychological foundation of the play, and to modify only what may be called the anti-psychological aspects of the position held by Professor Stoll. It is perfectly possible that he, moreover, will admit the ensüing point of view, since at no time do I ask that Othello be psychologically explained as a "real person" might be. I seek, rather, to show an interesting effort on Shakspere's part to establish a psychological "background" for some of Othello's actions, actions which yet may be viewed as psychologically improbable. In pointing this out I shall also show that much of the psychological material was suggested by Shakspere's source.

Mr. Stoll's well-known interpretation denies to *Othello* a psychological motivation of the central character; it asserts, rather, that the play contains what could be called a successful motivation of the audience through stagecraft and skilled poetry, all to such a degree that the audience accepts the psychologically incredible. Although the variations of this argument make simplification objectionable, it may be said that one principle controls throughout Mr. Stoll's view. That principle is that no psychological theory can integrate Othello's experience and his naivete, his swift decision and the crude stimulus for it, his affection for Desdemona and his failure to question her about the slander.

There may be no sound reason for denying this, but there is a reservation which may be made: I suggest that if Mr. Stoll's premises be accepted, the legitimate inference from them is not his conclusion that psychological interpretation of *Othello* be abandoned, but rather that attempts at psy-

chological integration of the character be abandoned. More specifically, I suggest that even if it be true that no psychological theory can make a credible unity of Othello's personality, his improbable acts and beliefs may yet be seen to arise from psychological processes which, apart from their results, are sound and probable. I hope that this will seem less paradoxical as discussion of the play develops.

Our procedure becomes one of examining *Othello* with attention to three well known situations in which the improbable happens, but in each of which a sound psychological process, logically connected with slander and jealousy, is successfully dramatized. There is nothing novel about some of the matters to which attention will be called; certain of them have perhaps become too familiar. There is, however, the usual necessity of surveying old material in order to re-evaluate it.

The first of the psychological processes which have been mentioned as occurring in *Othello* is based upon the principle that effective persuasion of others comes not from frontal assault but from tactics leading the object of persuasion to convince himself of the desired conclusion. It is perhaps well recognized, that Othello is allowed to institute, develop, and confirm suspicion on his own responsibility. I wish to emphasize, however, that I am not calling attention to Iago's often-noted coyness but rather to the phenomenon of Othello's personal initiative and persistence in reaching the conclusion of Desdemona's guilt. In the scene[1] in which his sinister imagination is set in motion, Iago, calling attention to Cassio's departure from Desdemona, remarks cryptically, "Ha! I like not that," and disclaims instantly any significance for the observation. Othello, his curiosity prompted, asks, "Was not that Cassio parted from my wife," and upon Iago's denial discovers for himself, in dialogue with Desdemona, that it was Cassio who had stolen away "so guilty like." Desdemona asks her boon, Cassio's reinstatement, and as Othello's suspicion dies down Iago broaches the subject: "My noble lord—*Did* Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady, know of your love?" Iago is tentative to the point of exasperation; Othello, for the next hundred lines, places him under a cogent and dramatic cross-

examination, and it is during the course of this that the process of Othello's morbid analysis and self-persuasion starts. Ironically his very disclaimer of jealousy, which caps the passage mentioned, contains his declaration that "to be once in doubt is once to be resolved," and ironically also, his line beginning with "I'll see before I doubt" ends with "when I doubt I'll prove." Iago then alludes to the "pranks" of Venetian wives and to Desdemona's deception of her father; as he leaves, Othello contemplates his course of action: "If I do prove her haggard . . . I'll whistle her off and let her down the wind to prey at fortune." Othello shortly leaves the stage and upon his return later is in great agitation. He tells Iago that he has been set upon the rack and swears that "'tis better to be much abused than but to know't a little." Then in vituperative speech he exhibits what this "little" has become with the accretion of his own thought:

> What sense had I of her stol'n hours of lust?
> I saw it not, thought it not, it harm'd not me.
>
> I had been happy if the general camp,
> Pioneers and all, had tasted her sweet body,
> So I had nothing known.[2]

Henceforth it is Othello who demands demonstration of Desdemona's guilt. His hysterical requirements of Iago echo with the word "proof"—"ocular proof," "probation" that bears "no hinge or loop." Othello is only nominally searching for evidence; in actuality he is crying for certainty at any price, and doing so in the office of prosecuting counsel, with Iago in the role of a badgered prurient witness.

It is easy to say, with Mr. Stoll and others, that all this would be melodrama but for the poetic sureness of line which, in Shakspere, often sustains extravaganza where rant or flatulence would destroy it. And it is easy to say that no scene more effectively shows Shakspere to be a master of stagecraft as opposed to consecutive character development. Literally considered, such things are true; abstract out the stagecraft and poetry, then question the causal sequence leading to Othello's paroxysm, and melodrama, perhaps bad melodrama, would remain.

Mr. Stoll and similar interpreters, however, infer from

this that the play is devoid of psychological motivation. But is not the scene we have just reviewed grounded upon an assumption that Othello's transition from calm to agitated jealousy is more credible if dramatized as self-developed doubt, self-propelled persuasion? Has not Shakspere dramatized the psychological truism that persuasion and conviction move far more readily by that route? Perhaps these questions may be answered better if we imagine an alternative rendition of the scene; suppose Shakspere had cast Othello in a passive rather than an active role; suppose that not Othello but Iago had forced the issue, that not Othello but Iago had moved step by step to shriller emotion, more abounding rhetoric. Would not the Moor's ultimate belief in Iago have been far less plausible, even with the skillful handling of poetry, tensity, and fast movement? And would not this absence of plausibility have then been attributable simply to a bad psychological mistake made by Shakspere?

Those who share Mr. Stoll's point of view insist, moreover, that the scene just described shows perfectly Shakspere's customary abandonment of psychological development and exploitation of pure situation. Situation it is, but it is "psychological situation" as well as dramatic situation; it is deliberately rooted in simple psychological truth—not literal truth about ordered conduct drawn from life, but a true process regulating the way reluctant belief is most effectively swayed. From this process the improbable (Othello's capitulation) may be said to arise, but the process itself is psychologically sound, and an absence of it would come near cancelling all verisimilitude in the scene.[3]

As a controversy like the Othello problem grows old, distinctions and reconciliations begin to sound over refined. In an effort to remove the conclusions just reached from decadent quibbling, I offer an analogy. From dramatic necessity, Macbeth's quick progress to murder, from the horrid suggestion which unfixes his hair on through Duncan's fatal night—all this, according to literal psychological standards, is preposterous. Some two hundred lines after the "witches' " prophecy Macbeth arrives at Inverness to find his wife's homicidal mind practically made up. But does anyone say that the psychological process Macbeth

undergoes—fascinated by the sinister implications of the prophecy, steeled from wavering by his wife, and in a dense trance of remorse after it is over—does anyone say that such a process is psychological nonsense merely because the murder of Duncan involves a speed of decision and locomotion which defies reality? Does anyone urge that there is no psychological drama there, that instead the episode succeeds only because of dramatic sleight of hand and nuances of mannerism and poetry? The parallel with *Othello,* I trust, is obvious.

The same principle of interpretation may serve to explain a second so-called psychological impossibility in *Othello,* specifically the failure of the Moor to confront Desdemona with interrogation or accusation. This also has come to be viewed in the light of dramatic convention and Shaksperian skill in slurring and blurring. Rightly enough, but Shakspere in using these techniques is not so careless of psychological assumptions as are his interpreters. Gradual, complete, or "real" motivation here also may be impossible, but Shakspere, again in a well-contrived scene, dramatizes a simple and relevant psychological process. It is the phenomenon of morbid and malignant secretiveness—"I have something against you, but you shall not have the satisfaction of knowing what it is." Thus in Act IV, scene 2, Othello does confront Desdemona; he confronts her with innuendo: "Let me see your eyes." He orders Emilia to ply her duties as a prostitute's attendant: "Some of your function, mistress." He reduces Desdemona to a pulp of anguished mystification, and then shouts that she is as false as hell. In reply to her imploring "To whom, my lord, with whom, how am I false?" he puts her aside in grief with, "O Desdemona[7] away! away! away!"

This scene, like the one first discussed, might never serve to account, in any "real life" sense, for Othello's failure to check elementary facts by consultation with Desdemona. But again, in its forceful dramatization of a psychologically sound principle, in its exploiting of what may be called "psychological situation", it achieves the limit of motivation possible within a factually incredible plot. It shows with maximum effect that the operation of malignant secretive-

ness is very often a manifestation of morbid suspicion, and it asks us to apply the principle imaginatively to a framework of the non-actual and improbable.

We may consider next the most spectacular of Shakspere's methods of providing, in *Othello,* psychologically sound processes through which the psychologically unlikely transpires. This method is one involving expertly dramatized irrationality in the protagonist.[4] There has been traditionally a tacit avoidance of this emotional crisis of Othello, perhaps because of the feeling that he would lose tragic dignity by ascription to him of something close to madness. Shakspere, however, has emphasized it in a well-known scene in which Othello utterly goes under. After the lie regarding an intimate interview with Cassio and after the setting in motion of the paraphernalia of entrapment, Iago returns to Othello with intelligence. By impetuous questioning Othello drags the news from him: Cassio has blabbed (that is the word) of his lying with Desdemona. Othello, his mind confused and overwhelmed, then breaks the blank verse sequence with his amazing and disjointed outburst:

> Handkerchief—confession—handkerchief!—
> To confess and be hanged for his labor;—
> First to be hanged and then to confess.—
> I tremble at it . . . It is
> Not words that shake me thus. Pish!
> Noses, ears, and lips.—Is't possible?
> —confess—handkerchief! O devil![5]

And in the folio this is followed by the stage direction, "Falls into a traunce."[6]

Mr. Stoll points out that such verbal anarchy is common to Elizabethan stage cuckolds, but the convention does not rob the episode of its quality as a remarkable emotional collapse. An emotional collapse it is by the standards of any place or time,[7] and, significantly here, it has been induced by the process traditionally understood to cause mental and emotional breakdown: a cumulative anxiety aggravated by repetitive irritations. It is scarcely more real insanity than Hamlet's, but it is a profound emotional chaos, and the dramatization of it is in *Othello.* Would a "real" character have undergone such a debacle under the stimulation of Iago? Probably not. But as "psychological situation,"

Othello's emotional collapse and its causes mentioned above, are in the play with great forthrightness. Such phenomena add immeasurably to the play's motivation, both dramatic and psychological.

One of the arresting facts surrounding the psychological material under examination is the occurrence of a good part of it in Shakspere's source. Everyone knows the meagerness of the simple story of Cinthio of which *Othello* is the outgrowth. Yet, in spite of the shortness of the Italian tale, two of the central psychological processes we have reviewed are developed directly from it. Othello's morbid but understandable secretiveness is described in Cinthio thus:

> ". . . (Disdemona) said to him again and again, 'What is the matter? What troubles you? How comes it that you . . . are now so melancholy?'
> "The Moor feigned various reasons in reply to his wife's questioning, but she was not satisfied."[8]

Yet another of the psychological processes under consideration, Othello's self-developed belief in Desdemona's guilt, is likewise in the source. Cinthio's account runs as follows:

> " 'Perchance,' said he (the ensign), the lady Disdemon may have reason to look kindly on him (the captain).'
> " 'And wherefore?' said the Moor.
> " 'Nay, I would not step 'twixt man and wife,' replied the Ensign 'but let your eyes be witness to themselves.'
> "In vain the Moor went on to question the officer, (but) he would proceed no further; nevertheless, his words left a sharp stinging thorn in the Moor's heart, who could think of nothing else, trying to guess their meaning and lost in melancholy."[9]

And in another place in the source the same psychological phenomenon is depicted, this time as a frank prescription:

> Meanwhile the Moor sought in every way to convince himself of what he fain would have found untrue. . . .[10]

We find Shakspere originating only the third of the psychological episodes, that of mental and emotional collapse from suspicion and uncertainty. Not a hint of that appears in Cinthio.

In conclusion, and in order to depart from over-simplification, it may be interesting to observe the relation between

the present psychological interpretation of *Othello* and two important passages from Mr. Stoll. In *Othello, an Historical and Comparative Study* (1915), he remarks upon a distinction frequently ignored:

> "As a whole, in the relation of Othello tempted to Othello untempted, the psychology of the nero is false, or might be said to be non-existent, just as it is non-existent in the whole convention of Iago's impenetrable hypocrisy and his bamboozling of all the cleverest people in the play. And yet, if illogical, irresponsible, fitful, but unflagging sympathy—the sympathy of the imagination—is the only test, Othello is as psychological a being as the hand of man has framed."[11]

Shakspere's emphasis upon character drawing and neglect of psychology[12] in *Othello* Mr. Stoll notes emphatically again in *Shakespeare and Other Masters* (1940):

> That high and tragic but improbable situation has in the play been comprehended and realized in both speech and action. What is more remarkable, the hero also has been realized as a man. By consonance of traits, not consistency of motives, by poetry not analysis or inner disclosure, by word and figure, by accent and rhythm, this great thing has been brought about. The dramatist . . . keeps away from science—from psychology (and holds) to his art.[13]

These two excerpts show an aspect of Stoll's position often not understood by those who conceive of him mistakingly as denying the importance of characterization in Shakspere. For here, in effect, he has said that the most extraordinary phenomenon in *Othello* is the emergence of its hero as a man, as a character, and this in defiance or neglect of the type of motivation known as psychological.

In the light of this point of view it may be charged that an attempt such as the present one to show psychology in *Othello* is a waste of time—that character drawing is simply beyond the literal limits of psychology. The answer to this, however inconclusive, will be brief. Mr. Stoll's assertion that character depiction is apart from psychology is acceptable as an abstract principle, but it is true, or at least incompletely true, when applied to a play like *Othello* in which there has been a combining of psychology and character drawing. Such a combination need not necessarily have been made, but Shakspere seems to have made it, and the sum is a character based upon Mr. Stoll's prescriptions of manner

and speech and, just as significantly, upon a level-headed exploitation of psychological processes, two of which were suggested by Cinthio. I suggest here the most stringent of tests: remove from the play the psychological fundamentals of Othello's self-persuasion and self-delusion, his interesting malignant secretiveness in dealing with Desdemona, and his definite psychosis or breakdown from a hysterical desire to change, at any cost, uncertainty into certainty—remove these elements and the implausibility of the plot, then screened only by stage convention, and mannerisms of character and poetry, would be dangerously apparent.

To sum up: Mr. Stoll's error, it seems to me, lies in the inference that because Othello's actions are not to be integrated by any given psychological theory, psychological motivation is absent.[14] I suggest that what have been called "psychological processes" are prominent within situations and that these situations could scarcely succeed without this. According to Mr. Stoll's premises, moreover, such employment of situation should be considered both customary and sound as dramatic usage.

University of Washington.

---

[1]III, iii.

[2]III, iii, 394-402.

[3]In dramatizing Othello's progress from peace of mind to jealousy, Shakespeare may have been "intuitive" or analytical in choosing the psychological manner in which that happens. It is immaterial how "conscious" Shakespeare was of the psychological basis. The important thing is that it is there; as the test above indicates, its absence would vitiate the scene.

[4]Besides the passage quoted below which describes Othello falling into a "traunce", there is the allusion to his two fits of "epilespy" (IV, i, 51-2), and Iago's observation that Othello "shall go mad" under the strain (IV, 1, 101-04).

[5]IV, 1, 36-44.

[6]"He fals down." *Q* 1. "Falles . . . trance." *Q* 2, 3, 4.

[7]The "epilepsy" and madness of Othello have, of course, a somewhat specialized explanation under the psycho-physiology current in Shakspere's day, but not one which affects the present interpretation All that is relevant here is that there is a psychosis or breakdown, and that it is based upon a process of growing uncertainty and anxiety.

[8]See the Variorum *Othello,* p. 384. There, one may compare the translation with the original Italian.

[9]*Ibid.,* p. 380.

[10]*Ibid.,* p. 385.

[11]*Othello, an Historical and Comparative Study,* p. 69.

[12]"The psychology is the framework, so to speak; the character is the life and soul. The psychology is the anatomy; and as a great sculptor or painter may . . . neglect or simplify the latter, so a great dramatist may here or there neglect or simplify the former." (*Art and Artifice in Shakespeare,* p. 53.) "Of character he

[Othello] has no end—without much more psychology than there is in a painting of Titian's or a dramatic melody of Mozart's." (*Othello, an Historical and Comparative Study,* p. 59.)

[13]In the chapter, "Othello the Man," p. 211.

[14]Again, I suggest that it is possible, or even probable, that Mr. Stoll would admit the distinction I have made between psychological "processes" in a play and psychological integration of a character; he might reply that, after all, he is interested only in the impossibility of integrating Othello as a psychological entity. In advance of this objection, however, I believe it should be pointed out that Mr. Stoll does not make the distinction I suggest and that, in support of one more reason why *Othello* is a convincing play, it should be made, particularly in view of Mr. Stoll's repeated denial of "psychology" within the play.